

Drug Policy Advisory Council Meeting
2nd Floor Conference Room, Wallace State Office Building
August 11, 2011 Minutes

Voting Council Members Present: Chairman Mark Schouten, Katrina Cater-Larson (phone), Barb Anderson for Cyndy Erickson, Kevin Frampton, Paul Stageberg, Vern Armstrong, Kathy Stone, Todd Thoeming for Eric Snyder, David Lorenzen, Jennifer Benson (phone), Warren Hunsberger, and Jane Larkin.

Non-voting Members Present: Stephan Arndt, Major Sonya Finch, Stephanie Strauss (phone), and Chief Mike Lashbrook (phone).

Guest: Steve Maertens, Iowa National Guard.

Staff: Dale Woolery, Dennis Wiggins, Becky Swift and Becky Bell.

Welcome and introductions

Chairman Schouten called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. The Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes as presented.

Jennifer Benson reported that she is now with the Webster County Attorney's office.

Legislative Update

Schouten provided an update on ODCP legislative issues. He reported that the Legislature passed and the Governor recently signed a new law adding synthetic cannabinoids (K2) and synthetic cathinones (bath salts) to the list of Schedule 1 Controlled Substances in Iowa. The law also bans the organic hallucinogen Salvia divinorum. The K2 bill went into effect immediately but the bath salts language will go into effect in either 30 or 60 days.

Schouten also commented on the proposal to eliminate ODCP and transfer the grant dollars to the Departments of Public Safety and Public Health the recent legislative session. He thanked the Council members for their support in keep ODCP intact. In the end, ODCP was not eliminated but its state funding was cut by 10%. Schouten will be meeting with members of the Legislature in the near future.

ODCP Projects Update

Schouten reported that ODCP and the Department of Corrections have discussed the possibility of funding a pilot accountability court based on the Project Hope model which Hawaii reports has resulted in significant reductions in substance abuse and recidivism among high risk probationers. The Project Hope model is essentially a zero tolerance approach to probation violations. Offenders receive clear instruction on what is expected of them and when violations for drug use, curfew, missed appointments, etc. occur offenders are quickly incarcerated for short periods in the county jail. Hawaii's experience has been that swiftness and certainty of minor sanctions outperforms uncertain and delayed severe sanctions. The Hawaii project reports an 83% reduction in positive UAs, 71% reduction in missed appointments, and offenders spent about one-third as many days in prison on revocations or new convictions.

Katrina Carter-Larson welcomed the initiative and said that some of the correctional offices already have programs with similar objectives in place.

ODCP is also working on building the Drug Endangered Children (DEC) initiative by increasing the number of local programs by 10%. Becky Swift is working with law enforcement and the Department of Human Services in several counties to start up additional DEC programs.

Schouten said the Iowa Pseudoephedrine Tracking System (which utilizes the consumer health care industry's National Precursor Log Exchange - NPLeX) will have been in place one year on September 1. This is a database that tracks pseudoephedrine transactions, allowing Iowa pharmacies to block over-the-legal-limit purchase attempts to deter methamphetamine manufacturing. After almost a year of NPLeX in Iowa, there have been over 805,637 successful purchases of PSE, and 29,592 attempts to purchase over the legal limit have been blocked. ODCP will issue a pseudoephedrine tracking report to the Legislature by year's end.

Kevin Frampton reported meth labs are on the rise. He said newer and smaller "one pot" labs are becoming more popular in the Midwest, mostly for convenience and because it requires smurfing (circumventing laws to make seemingly legal purchases) smaller amounts of pseudoephedrine. He reported one Iowa "one pot" lab had 80 separate containers cooking meth in one room.

Schouten said the Public Safety Advisory Board (PSAB) is looking at penalties for crack cocaine, to determine if threshold amounts should be equalized with, or adjusted to be closer to, penalties for powder cocaine. Currently, for every gram of crack cocaine, it takes 10 grams of powder cocaine to warrant the same criminal penalty. The sentencing disparity on the federal level has been narrowed to be more in line with current state law, but some still claim any disparity is unfairly discriminatory, since many of those convicted on crack charges are African American. Others argue crack cocaine is more potent than cocaine, contributing to more violent gang and other criminal behavior, and should command harsher penalties.

Schouten is also reviewing penalties for pharmaceutical diversion, and said PSAB may eventually call for a review of all drug penalties.

2010 Iowa Youth Survey

Arndt reported no real surprises in the recently released 2010 Iowa Youth Survey results, as general youth substance abuse trends tend to be stable or modestly downward. While underage and youth binge drinking in Iowa remains above the national average, the latest figures show we are getting closer to the national norm. Compared to data from a decade ago, Arndt said the latest Iowa Youth Survey shows anti-drug attitudes are trending in the right direction, with more students responding it is wrong to smoke marijuana. He believes communities and parents are influencing kids' attitudes.

Backscatter X-Ray and Drug Detection

Dave Lorenzen reported on a joint commercial vehicle interdiction demonstration project which involved local, state, and federal enforcement agencies. The project was organized by the Mid-Iowa Narcotics Enforcement (M.I.N.E.) Task Force and funded by the Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy, and took place at three DOT weigh stations over two days in July. The Kansas Highway Patrol provided a portable vehicular x-ray unit which was used to augment traditional interdiction techniques.

Nearly 1,000 vehicles were scanned at weigh stations on interstates 80 and 35. A small amount of marijuana was confiscated. Several lessons were learned during this project which will make future operations more efficient and effective.

Prescription Drug Abuse

Council members received a White Paper on Prescription Drug Abuse in Iowa. Woolery said this appears to be a rapidly growing problem in Iowa. To better define the nature and scope of the problem, ODCP is surveying substance abuse treatment providers, pharmacists and law enforcement officers in Iowa. Iowa's Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP), administered by the Board of Pharmacy, indicates a gradually increasing number of health care professionals are utilizing the PMP to detect prescription drug diversion and abuse, and the number of suspected doctor shopping incidents detected by the PMP may be declining.

ODCP has convened a task force of 30 plus physicians, pharmacists, substance abuse providers, regulators, law enforcement and other health care professionals to advise ODCP on developing a plan with recommendations to prevent/reduce prescription abuse in Iowa. Schouten noted ODCP convened a roundtable to discuss this issue in November 2004, and it's interesting to see the conclusions and achievements since then, including a few significant changes made by the Legislature (e.g., PMP).

The Prescription Abuse Reduction Task Force will advise ODCP on the nature and scope of the problem, needs, successful efforts and action steps moving forward.

ODCP plans to issue a report by December, and schedule a summit in January, based largely on input from Task Force members.

Agency/Association Updates

Jane Larkin said the Iowa Alliance of Coalitions for Change (AC4C) will concentrate on prescription drug abuse issues and will be educating the community members as well as physicians.

Kathy Stone reported there are particular characteristics for different addictions including pain management.

Stone said characteristics of addiction and addiction treatment vary by drug type and user, particularly when it comes to opioid (pain killers) abuse, because substance abuse treatment must be in balance with appropriate pain management.

Warren Hunsberger said most addicts have some kind of pain, and it's a real balancing act when trying to simultaneously treat pain and an addiction to pain medicine.

Steve Maertens said after suffering funding cuts earlier, the Iowa National Guard (ING) has some good news. It will receive \$306 thousand dollars that will allow new ING personnel to work with the MINE Task Force. The Guard will have seven criminal analysts working with the DEA and law enforcement on pseudoephedrine tracking. The Drug Demand Reduction section will add one substance abuse prevention officer.

Todd Thoeming said he will now represent the Iowa State Police Association on the Drug Policy Advisory Council, as an interim appointment replacing Eric Snyder. He is with the Davenport Police Department, and has been in law enforcement for 15 years.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m. The next meeting will be Thursday, November 10, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Bell

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